



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING



NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

April 28, 2008

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the County of San Diego, through its Department of Planning and Land Use, will be the Lead Agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act for the project identified below. The Department is seeking public and agency input on the scope and content of the environmental information to be contained in the EIR. The Notice of Preparation may be viewed on the World Wide Web at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/>; at the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU), Project Processing Counter, 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B, San Diego, California 92123; or at any San Diego County Library. For library locations please visit <http://www.sdcl.org/locations.html> or call (858) 694-2415. Comments on the Notice of Preparation must be received no later than May 28, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. (a 30 day public review period) and should be sent to the DPLU address listed above and should reference the project number and name.

PROJECT NUMBER AND NAME: LOG NO. 02-ZA-001; COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE (SCH #2002111067). The project is a comprehensive update of the County of San Diego's General Plan. The project includes the preparation of implementing policies, ordinances, and guidance documents. The updated General Plan will direct population growth balanced with infrastructure needs, development, and resource protection. The proposed project will have the effect of directing population capacity and development in the western portions of the unincorporated area and reducing the potential for growth in the eastern areas to balance growth and development with infrastructure needs and resource protection. The update will replace the existing General Plan including all of the elements, land use distribution maps and circulation maps. Community/Subregional Plans will also be updated. The project area encompasses the unincorporated area of San Diego County. For additional information, please visit the General Plan Update website at <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/> or contact the General Plan Update Hotline at (619) 615-8289 or by e-mail at gpupdate.dplu@sdcounty.ca.gov.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: A public scoping meeting will also be held in the DPLU Hearing Room at 5201 Ruffin Road, Suite B, San Diego, CA on May 15, 2008 from 5:30pm to 6:30pm. The meeting will provide a public forum for information dissemination, identification of issues, scope of review, and questions on the General Plan Update project, EIR, and the overall process. While staff will summarize the issues raised in this meeting and decisions made, anyone wishing to make formal comments on the Notice of Preparation must do so in writing. This scoping meeting is intended to satisfy the requirements of the Public Resources Code, Section 21083.9 that requires the Lead Agency to call at least one scoping meeting for the project.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

DATE: April 28, 2008

PROJECT NAME: County of San Diego General Plan Update

PROJECT APPLICANT: County of San Diego

ENV. REVIEW NUMBER: 02-ZA-001

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER: 2002111067

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The proposed project is a comprehensive update of the San Diego County General Plan. The Comprehensive General Plan Update will balance population growth and development with infrastructure needs and resource protection. More specifically, the proposed project will direct population capacity in the western portions of the County and reduce the potential for growth in the eastern areas.

This general population distribution is intended to: 1) plan for projected and expected population growth in the region; 2) facilitate efficient, orderly growth by containing development within areas proximate to existing infrastructure and services; 3) limit greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles by locating future residences closer to employment and town centers; 4) protect natural resources through the reduction of population capacity in sensitive areas; and 5) retain or enhance the character of communities within the unincorporated County.

The project will replace the existing General Plan including all of the elements, land use distribution maps, and circulation maps. The project will also update Community/Subregional Plans. Other components of the Comprehensive General Plan Update include, but are not limited to:

- Amendments to the existing Subdivision Ordinance, Resource Protection Ordinance, and other County ordinances, and/or adoption of new County ordinances as necessary to implement the updated General Plan;

- Adjustments to Community Planning Area and Sponsor Group Boundaries;
- Replacing the residential lot size requirements in the General Plan with a density-based approach;
- Resolving a court ruling that found inadequate an EIR for a previous General Plan Amendment (GPA 91-02) for the Central Mountain Subregion;
- Rescinding or updating outdated policies, ordinances, manuals, and other guidance documents and enacting new implementing policies, ordinances, manuals, and other guidance documents as needed to reflect current law and the updated General Plan;
- Rezoning as necessary to implement and/or maintain consistency with the updated General Plan.

The General Plan Update EIR will be a Program EIR. The detailed components of the General Plan Update are still under development or have not yet been started. However, development of the Update is guided by goals, policies, and planning concepts that have been endorsed by the Board of Supervisors. Board endorsements and other actions on the project, as well as associated hearing documents and relevant project documentation, are recorded and available on the General Plan Update website: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/>.

The Board of Supervisors has endorsed two draft Land Use Distribution Maps for review. The Board endorsed Referral Map (Exhibit 2) is projected to accommodate the most population and because its development was directed by the Board of Supervisors, it will serve as the Proposed Project. There will be several other alternatives that will be evaluated as alternatives to the Proposed Project. The maps that have been prepared and will be evaluated in the EIR illustrate the possible general distribution of population, as well as commercial and industrial uses, throughout the County. The maps indicate maximum allowable residential density or non-residential intensity planned within the various areas of the unincorporated region. The maps are available for purchase from the Department of Planning and Land Use and may also be viewed on or downloaded from the General Plan Update website: <http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dplu/gpupdate/>.

A circulation network has also been endorsed by the Board of Supervisors and is available for viewing or download on the General Plan Update website.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The County of San Diego is located in Southern California bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean, to the east by Imperial County, to the north by Orange and Riverside Counties, and to the south by Mexico (Exhibit 1). The project covers all unincorporated portions of the County of San Diego over which the County has land use jurisdiction.

While 18 incorporated cities lie within the County, the majority of the land (approximately 2,300,000 acres) within the County is unincorporated. Private land

ownership accounts for approximately 36% of the County's unincorporated lands. Public land ownership accounts for approximately 64% of the County's unincorporated lands. For purposes of this document public land consists of land either held or managed by County, Cities, State, or Federal agencies, or held in trust for the benefit of Native American governments.

The County terrain varies from west to east, sloping up from the ocean, transitioning to rolling hills and then steep mountains that finally give way to flat and gently sloping deserts. The County is generally a semi-arid environment and supports a wide range of habitats and biological communities. These habitats and communities range from grasslands and upland shrubs to coniferous forests and desert habitats. Additionally, these habitats and communities vary greatly depending on the ecoregion, rainfall, soils and substrate, elevation and topography.

The urban areas of the County are predominantly in the west, either surrounding the City of San Diego, or interspersed between the City of San Diego and the cities in Orange and Riverside Counties. Further east, the land is less developed, with the largest developed area in the eastern portion of the County being the community of Borrego Springs. Most areas that have been developed in the eastern portion of the County have been predominantly developed in a rural fashion, with large lot sizes, small community centers, agricultural or related uses, and have limited infrastructure and service availability.

The County is serviced by Interstates 5, 15, 163, and 805 that all run north and south throughout the western portion of the County and Interstate 8 that runs east and west throughout the southern portion of the County. Additionally, the County is serviced by State Highways 67 and 79 that both run north and south throughout the western and eastern sides of the County and State Highways 76, 78 and 94 that all run east and west across the County.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The County has determined that a Program EIR will be prepared for the proposed comprehensive General Plan Update. Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a Program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either: 1) geographically; 2) as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions; 3) in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program; or 4) as individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways. The Program EIR will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of CEQA Statutes and Guidelines, as amended. Pursuant to Section 15146 of the CEQA Guidelines the degree of specificity in the Program EIR will correspond to the degree of specificity involved in the comprehensive General Plan Update. The EIR will focus on

the primary effects that can be expected to follow from adoption of the comprehensive General Plan Update and will not be as detailed as an EIR on the specific development or construction projects that may follow. Based on the County's preliminary analysis of the project, the following environmental issues will be examined in the Program EIR:

Aesthetics – The EIR will identify regionally significant aesthetic resources and will evaluate the potential for the project to create regional visual or aesthetic impacts. Impacts to scenic vistas and resources throughout the County, including those along Scenic Highways, will be evaluated in the EIR. Moreover, the potential for the creation of substantial new sources of light and glare, on a regional level, will be evaluated for impacts on day and nighttime views, impacts to the dark sky character of rural communities, and impacts to the Palomar and Mount Laguna observatories.

Agriculture – The EIR will identify all prime agricultural lands and farmlands in the unincorporated County based on the California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection, Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program and existing County data. The EIR will assess impacts regionally, in terms of: 1) conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to a non-agricultural use; and 2) conflicts with existing zoning for agricultural use or Williamson Act contract lands.

Air Quality, Climate Change, and Energy – The EIR will describe the regional setting, ambient air quality standards, and air quality trends based on monitoring data provided by the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District. The EIR's analysis of impacts will evaluate: 1) conflicts with or obstruction of implementation of the San Diego Regional Air Quality Strategy (RAQS) or applicable portions of the State Implementation Plan (SIP); 2) violation of any air quality standard or substantial contribution to an existing or projected air quality violation; 3) a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region that has status of "non-attainment" under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard; 4) exposure of future sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; and 5) creation of objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people (future population).

The EIR will also address potential impacts to climate change. The EIR will contain an inventory of Greenhouse Gas emissions for the unincorporated lands that is primarily based on vehicular emissions. A comparison between 1990 emission rates and future emissions will be provided to relate to AB 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

Biological Resources – The EIR will identify important biological resources including habitats and species based on existing County and regional mapping data. The EIR will evaluate impacts in terms of: 1) potential adverse effects on any sensitive natural community (including riparian habitat) or species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in a local or regional plan, policy, or regulation, or by the California

Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 2) potential adverse effects to federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act; 3) interference with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with wildlife corridors, or impeding the use of native wildlife nursery sites; and 4) conflicts with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Communities Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan, policies or ordinances.

Cultural Resources – The EIR will review areas that contain known, regionally significant cultural resources, including paleontological resources. The EIR’s impact analysis will evaluate, on a regional level, whether the project will: 1) cause a change in the significance of a historical or archaeological resource as defined in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5; 2) disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries; and 3) destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature.

Geology and Soils – The EIR will summarize the geologic setting soil conditions, including major faults, seismicity, geologic formations, soil types and erodible soils, in the unincorporated County, based on existing County and regional data, including data from the California Division of Mines and Geology. The EIR’s impact analysis will evaluate on a regional level: 1) exposure of people (future population) or structures to the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction, strong seismic ground shaking, or landslides; 2) substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil; 3) unstable geological conditions that will result in adverse impacts resulting from landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse; 4) the location of expansive soil creating substantial risks to life or property; and 5) soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials – The EIR will identify hazards and hazardous material sources associated with the project. Specifically, the EIR will analyze impacts related to hazardous material sources, airport hazards, adopted emergency response plans and emergency evacuation plans, and wildland fires.

With regard to hazardous material sources the EIR will analyze, on a regional level, whether the project will: 1) create a significant hazard to the public (future population) or the environment through the routine transport, storage, use, or disposal of hazardous materials or wastes; 2) create a significant hazard to the public (future population) or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment; and 3) locate future uses on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 creating a hazard to the public or the environment.

With regard to airport hazards the EIR will identify locations within an airport land use plan (Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan) or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, or within the vicinity of a private airstrip. For all these locations the EIR will evaluate whether the project will result in a safety hazard for people (future population) in the unincorporated County.

All adopted County emergency response plans and emergency evacuation plans will be identified as a part of the EIR. The impact analysis will determine whether the project will impair the implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan and emergency evacuation plan.

Finally, with regard to wildland fires, the EIR will identify areas with potential for wildland fires. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the project to expose people (future population) or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands.

Hydrology and Water Quality – The EIR will identify County mapped hydrologic features and water resources including hydrologic basins, 100-year flood boundaries, surface waters, groundwater resources, dam inundation zones, and areas prone to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

With regard to hydrology, flooding, and dam inundation the EIR will analyze, on a regional level, whether the project will: 1) substantially alter the existing drainage patterns in a manner which would result in substantial erosion, siltation or flooding on- or off-site; 2) create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems; 3) place future housing or other structures which would impede or redirect flood flows within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on County Floodplain Maps; and 4) expose people (future population) or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam.

With regard to water quality the EIR will determine, on a regional level, whether the project will: 1) violate any waste discharge requirements; 2) increase any listed pollutant to an impaired water body listed under section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act; 3) cause or contribute to an exceedance of applicable surface or groundwater receiving water quality objectives or degradation of beneficial use; and 4) otherwise substantially degrade water quality.

With regard to groundwater the EIR will analyze whether the project will substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level.

Finally, the EIR will analyze whether the project will create potential for regional inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

Land Use and Planning – The EIR will discuss the substantial differences between the proposed and existing County General Plan and other applicable land use plans, ordinances, policies and regulations including but not limited to specific plans and zoning ordinance. Also, the EIR will analyze whether the project results in any physical division of established communities. Moreover, the EIR will identify potential land use conflicts and community character issues resulting from the juxtaposition of proposed land use designations.

Mineral Resources – The EIR will identify mapped mineral resources and deposits. The impact analysis will evaluate the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state and loss of locally-important mineral resource recovery sites.

Noise – The EIR will summarize applicable standards and detail major noise sources including but not limited to major regional railways, roadways and air traffic. The EIR's impact analysis will evaluate on a regional level: 1) exposure of persons (future population) to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the County's Noise Ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies; 2) exposure of persons (future population) to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels; 3) substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels; 4) substantial temporary or periodic increases in ambient noise levels; 5) exposure of people (future population) residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels for projects located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan (Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan) or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport.

Population and Housing – The EIR will describe anticipated population, employment, and housing effects from the project. The EIR will evaluate, on a regional level, whether the project will: 1) physically effect the environment due to changes in the population and housing conditions; 2) displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere; and 3) satisfy the County's fair share of housing.

Public Services – The EIR will identify types of governmental facilities and services that serve the unincorporated portion of the County, (e.g. fire and sheriff services and sub-stations, schools, and parks). The EIR will discuss the regional location and types of governmental facilities and services improvements that may be required to meet the anticipated demand of future growth and population.

Recreation – The EIR will identify regional recreational resources (e.g. County Parks). The EIR will analyze whether the project will result in an increase in the use of existing

neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of these recreational facilities would occur or be accelerated based on future population growth.

Transportation and Traffic – The EIR will identify existing and proposed buildout traffic conditions on road segments and intersections with unacceptable levels of services. This identification will include federal and state highways, and County transit systems including circulation element roads. The EIR will evaluate whether the project will: 1) effectively encourage alternative forms of transportation as a means of reducing automobile traffic; 2) substantially increase traffic in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system; 3) exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways; 4) change air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks to future population; 5) substantially increase hazards due to a known design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); 6) result in inadequate emergency access; 7) conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks).

To satisfy the requirements of the Public Resources Code, Section 21092.4 the County will consult with transportation planning agencies and public agencies which have transportation facilities within their jurisdiction which could be affected by the project.

Utilities and Service Systems – The EIR will identify types of utilities and service systems that serve the unincorporated portion of the County, (e.g. wastewater treatment facilities, stormwater drainage facilities, and water supply facilities). The EIR will discuss the regional location and types of infrastructure and service improvements that may be required to meet the anticipated demand of future growth and population.

Cumulative Impacts – The EIR will include a separate section, which identify whether the project's impacts, for each of the subject areas identified above, are cumulatively considerable. "Cumulatively considerable" means that "the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects."

Long Term Environmental Effects – The EIR will discuss growth inducing impacts, and significant irreversible environmental changes associated with General Plan buildout.

Alternatives – The alternatives will be assessed in light of the same environmental issues identified for the project. As previously discussed, the Board-endorsed Referral Map will be the Proposed Project. The Hybrid Map, Draft Map, and Environmentally Superior Map Alternatives will be evaluated as alternatives to the Proposed Project. In general, these alternatives contain reduced or reconfigured development density or

intensity compared to the Proposed Project. As a result, they are anticipated to reduce impacts associated with environmental considerations, which are particularly sensitive to density and intensity considerations including but not limited to air quality, biology, population and housing, public services and utilities, and transportation and traffic. A No Project alternative, buildout under the existing General Plan, will also be considered.

Attached Exhibits:

- Project Regional Location Map
- Proposed Project/Referral Map

County of San Diego Location Map

